



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

above all. The Letters are crammed full of quotations and loving references, and of echoes of the great writers. Furthermore, a man's letters reveal whatever of charm his intimate personality may offer. Take for example *Ep.* 4 [46], the gem of the whole collection, in which Julian presents Evagrius with the little "four-acre" estate of his mother, where he had spent many happy days. After a charming picture of its situation, within sight of the Propontis, he adds: "Here, too, is a trifling reminder of my own gardening, low vines producing wine that is both fragrant and sweet. This has no need to wait for years to add to itself the gift of Bacchus or the Graces. No, the grape on the vine, the juice as it drips into the vat, smells of roses, and while still fresh in the jars the wine is a 'rill of nectar,' as Homer says. Why then have I not increased the acreage of vines like these? As it happens, I am not a very enthusiastic farmer. This is but a small gift that I am making you, dear fellow; its charm lies in its coming from a friend to a friend, 'from my home to yours,' to quote the inspired Pindar.

"Please pardon any errors. I have been writing this by lamp-light."

SAMUEL E. BASSETT

UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT

The Ruin of the Ancient Civilization and the Triumph of Christianity: with some consideration of conditions in the Europe of today. GUGLIELMO FERRERO. Translated by THE HON. LADY WHITEHEAD. G. P. Putnam's Sons, N. Y., 1921. Pp. IV+210.

According to Ferrero, the real cause of the ruin of ancient civilization was political. It was the breakdown of the principle of authority. His view may be summarized as follows. For two centuries after the founding of the Principate, the emperors had found a legitimate basis for their authority in the senatorial sanction, as it was recognized that the Senate alone could rightfully confer the imperial powers. But Septimius Severus disregarded the Senate's prerogative and based his authority upon the support of his troops. Such a step meant substituting force for legitimacy as the basis of the imperial power, a new doctrine which was responsible for the fifty years of confusion between 235 and 285 B. C. This period of political disorder caused the cultural and economic breakdown of ancient civilization. Diocletian tried to find a new principle of legitimacy in a

divine absolutism. But this principle came into conflict with the rising tide of Christianity and, after a brief struggle, was abandoned definitely by Constantine I. Constantine introduced the hereditary principle, and sought to use Christianity as a moral force uniting the empire and supporting political authority. But herein he was deceived, for Christianity pursued an ideal independent of politics. Its energies were absorbed in a new struggle, the defence of orthodoxy. Deprived of this support the imperial power soon disappeared in the West, but maintained itself longer in the East, where absolutism was a native development. Theology was the only form of higher culture which survived the fall of the Roman Empire, and out of the intellectual unity which it created a principle of political authority was evolved once more. The twentieth century resembles the third in that it has experienced a breakdown of the principle of legitimate authority in the great states of continental Europe—Russia, Austria, and Germany—and this condition threatens to bring about the collapse of western civilization.

While it may be granted that the breakdown of an accepted basis of authority was a striking feature of third century political life and had very disastrous consequences, it must be kept in mind that this condition was not itself a first cause, but only a result of other forces which had been long at work undermining the political and social fabric of the Roman Empire. In short, Ferrero's view is based upon a false estimate of the influence of the Senate and the general prosperity of the Empire up to the close of the second century. Remove this basis and the theory collapses. Through ignoring the influence of other causes of the fall of ancient civilization, the author attains simplicity, but a simplicity based on distortion of facts. The sketch of the period from the Severi to Constantine is vivid and in general dependable. However, a serious omission occurs in ignoring the theoretical basis which Christianity furnished to autocracy after the time of Constantine, while the statement regarding Severus' use of the title *dominus* is certainly exaggerated. The translator has caught the spirit of the author's style, but has employed some unusual forms in the rendering of Roman names and terms; e. g., Sylla (p. 28); C. Julius Verus Maximin (p. 30); Tribonian Gallus (p. 50); "Mazeism" (p. 65); ediles (p. 149).

A. E. R. BOAK

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN